



# *The Effects of the Washington Education Reform on School and Classroom Practice, 1999-2000*

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**Preface**

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## Introduction

During the past five years, most states and many districts have undertaken standards-based educational reforms. One way that these efforts differ from earlier reforms is that they involve the adoption of content and student performance standards—explicit benchmarks of what students should know and be able to do. Another way the reforms differ from the past is that they seek to promote “higher” standards that emphasize, among other things, critical thinking and problem solving skills. In addition, many of these reforms also include accountability systems, with tests linked to the standards, and rewards and sanctions linked to school or student performance on the tests.

By the year 1999, 49 of 50 states had established student content or performance standards (*Education Week*, January 13, 2000). In addition, 48 states are developing or have implemented standards-based assessments, and 33 states have accountability measures that set performance goals for schools and school districts holding students, teachers, school administrators and/or district administrators responsible for student performance on the tests (Goertz, Duffy and Le Floch, 2001). A primary assumption of these reforms is that articulating standards and establishing incentives to meet the standards will motivate improved teaching and learning. Furthermore, many of these reforms use tests to measure student performance toward the standards and use test scores to judge school success.

Washington state is in the midst of a decade-long, standards-based reform of its educational system. This paper presents the findings of research on the impact of the Washington education reform on school and classroom practices, as reported by principals and teachers. We begin with a brief description of standards-based reform in Washington. That is followed by a discussion of our survey research methods. Our findings highlight the transitional nature of the Washington reform, with variations in educators’ knowledge of the reform and changes in school and

classroom practices. Finally, we discuss our overall conclusions and the strengths and weaknesses of our approach.

## **Background**

Since 1995, a team of researchers from RAND and the University of Colorado-Boulder has been studying the impact of standards-based reform on schools and classrooms. Earlier, the team conducted surveys and case studies about the reforms in Kentucky (Barron and Stecher, 1999; Borko and Elliott, 1998; Borko and Elliott, 1999; Stecher, Barron, Kaganoff and Goodwin, 1998; Stecher and Barron, 1999; McIver and Wolf, 1999; Wolf and McIver, 1999). In 1998-99, the team turned its attention to Washington's reforms to contrast findings in two states with distinguishing features in their assessment and accountability systems.

Washington provides appropriate conditions for studying the effects of reform. The state policies established to support the attainment of the state's learning goals mirror the current educational reforms nationwide. In 1993, with the passage of the Student Learning and Improvement Act (the "Education Reform Act"), Washington state committed itself to an education system that promotes rigorous standards for its students. The goals of the reform are that all students shall:

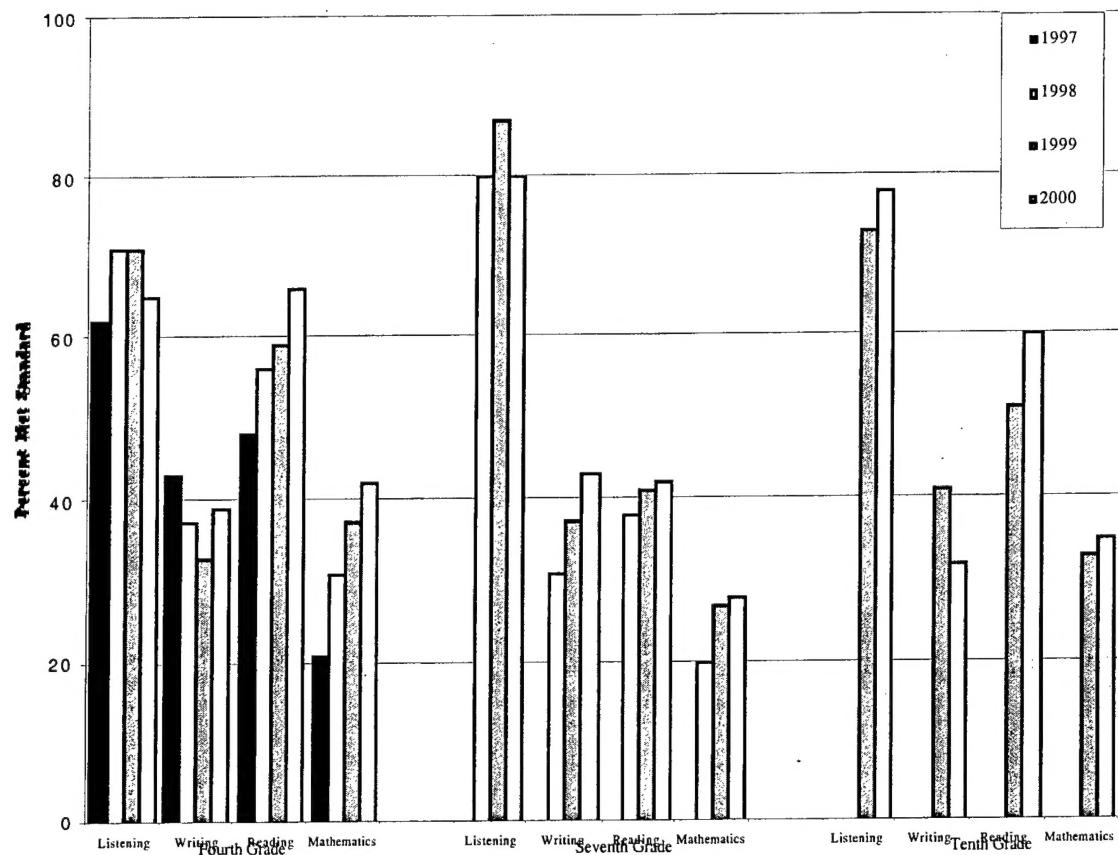
1. Read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings;
2. Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical and life sciences; civics and history; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
3. Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and integrate experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgements and solve problems;
4. Understand the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions affect future career and educational opportunities.

Washington's reform employs many of the same policy levers used by other states: a set of content-based expectations for learning, tests that are intended to measure performance on

standards, professional development to build capacity to teach to the standards, and incentives. Washington's standards are known as the Essential Academic Learning Requirements—EALRS, and the state's testing program is known as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). One feature that distinguishes the WASL is that it attempts to measure more critical thinking and problem solving skills by requiring open-ended responses and essays in response to writing tasks (prompts).

Washington's reform has also been more gradual than reforms in other states, such as California, Kentucky, Maryland and Texas. Rather than implementing the entire system at once, Washington is rolling out the components in steps beginning with standards and capacity-building in 1995, followed by tests in core subjects of mathematics, reading, writing and communication in 1997. School and student-level accountability and tests in other subjects (social studies, science, health and fitness, fine arts) are scheduled for full implementation by 2008.

Like students in many other states with challenging standards, Washington's students have performed disappointingly on the state tests, as shown in Figure 1. Washington began administering the WASL on a voluntary basis in 1997. The test was offered in the elementary benchmark grade four in reading, writing, mathematics and communication. In the following years, the tests became mandatory for fourth grade and were introduced on a voluntary basis in grade seven. For both grade levels, initial results from the WASL in mathematics, reading, and writing showed that fewer than 50 percent of students met the standards. In fact, in mathematics, only 20 percent of students met the standards in the first year of test administration. Over time, scores have increased in some subjects and decreased in others. It is common to see score increases in the early years of a new test as teachers and students become familiar with the test format and content emphases. When high stakes are attached to test performance it is also common to find teachers engaged in test preparation activities designed to improve scores.



**Figure 1**  
**Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) Scores**  
**for Students in Grades 4, 7 and 10**

## Methods

In 1999 and again in 2000, RAND researchers surveyed Washington principals and teachers to understand how the state's education reforms are being enacted at the school level. The surveys included questions about educators' knowledge of the reforms, local policy changes made in response to reforms, changes in classroom practice, activities that prepare students for the tests, and educators' opinions about the reforms. The survey responses provide two consecutive snapshots of opinion and practice in Washington's schools in 1999 and 2000. The results are a valuable resource for understanding the extent to which the standards-based reforms are being

enacted. Herman (2000) describes such data as “proximate indicators of progress and an important goal in itself.”

**Sampling.** Survey procedures for 1999 are described in detail in Stecher, Barron, Chun and Ross (2000), and the same procedures were followed in 2000. In brief, each year we surveyed a stratified random sample of about 140 elementary and middle school principals and about 400 fourth and seventh grade teachers from across the state of Washington (see Table 1). We excluded from the sample schools with fewer than 20 students in the tested grade and schools with recent changes in their service areas. Each year we selected an independent sample of 70 elementary schools and 70 middle schools. All principals were included in the study. In small schools, all teachers in the target grades and subjects (fourth grade, seventh grade mathematics and seventh grade writing) were included in the study. In large elementary schools with more than three teachers, a random sample of three teachers was selected. In large middle schools with more than two math or writing teachers, random samples of up to two writing teachers and up to two math teachers were selected.

**Table 1**  
**Survey Samples and Response Rates**

Respondent	1999		2000	
	Sample size	Response rate	Sample size	Response rate
Elementary principals	70	75.7%	67	80.5%
Grade 4 teachers	179	74.9%	185	75.7%
Middle school principals	70	78.6%	64	76.6%
Grade 7 writing and mathematics teachers	221	64.7%	208	72.1%

School cooperation was solicited by telephone, and names of teachers were obtained during these calls. Principals and sampled teachers were sent surveys by mail. Enclosed with the survey was a letter from the Superintendent of Public Instruction urging respondents to cooperate, a copy of the survey to be completed, a return envelope, and a ten-dollar gift certificate for purchasing books or other instructional materials. As Table 1 shows, the response rates for both groups of

respondents were high in both years. In 2000, 108 principals (82 percent response rate) and 299 teachers (76 percent response rate) returned completed surveys.

The median tenure for principals who responded in 2000 was five years for elementary and three years for middle school principals. On average, the teachers who completed surveys had about a dozen years of experience. In 2000, the median tenure for fourth grade teachers and seventh grade writing teachers was 13 years and for seventh grade mathematics teachers, it was 12 years. Overall, teachers had acquired one-half of their teaching experience at their current school. About one-half of the teachers had master's degrees. Teachers in the sample resembled the teachers in the state as a whole in terms of experience and education level, based on recent research conducted by the legislature (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, 1999; pp. 34-35).

In terms of subject matter, almost all fourth-grade teachers in the sample were responsible for teaching all subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics, communication, social studies and science. About one-third did not teach art, and about one-third did not teach health. Almost all teachers identified as seventh grade writing teachers also taught reading and communication, and two-thirds also taught social studies. A small percentage of the seventh grade mathematics teachers (10-20 percent) also taught other subjects in addition to mathematics.

**Surveys.** The Washington teacher surveys were similar to surveys the project developed and administered in Kentucky in 1997-98; however, they were modified to reflect the language and priorities of the Washington reform. The teacher surveys collected information about teachers' familiarity with and opinions about the state reforms, their participation in professional development, and their classroom practices. In terms of practice, the survey asked teachers about their allocation of time to different subjects, their teaching strategies, and the topics they covered within writing and mathematics. Additionally, teachers reported recent changes in instruction and the major factors that influenced instructional changes, including the state reforms. Questions about the content of the writing and mathematics curriculum were based on the Washington Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs).

The principal surveys focused on education reform at both the district and school levels. They included questions about curriculum, standards, assessments, and accountability at the district level. The surveys also included questions about implementation (e.g., how the respondent learned about the reform, whether they endorse its principles, etc.), impact (e.g., changes made as a result of the reform, factors that were most influential, etc.), and testing (e.g., test preparation practices) at the school level.

For 2000, we modified the surveys to reflect changes in Washington's education policies (e.g., accountability system, Washington Reading Corps). We deleted some items from the 1999 survey because they did not discriminate well, and we added new items that focused on additional questions of interest. Most of the items relating to teacher background and to mathematics and writing curriculum and instruction were the same in both years. \*

**Data Analysis.** For most questions on the principal and teacher surveys, we computed frequency distributions of responses at each point on the response scale. We often combined the top or bottom two categories for reporting, but not if this obscured interesting differences. For questions requiring a numeric response, means and standard deviations were calculated. Because we sampled teachers in the larger schools, we had to weight teachers' responses to obtain results that reflected all teachers in Washington (fourth grade teachers, seventh grade writing teachers, and seventh grade mathematics teachers). The weight assigned to each teacher was the product of the inverses of the probability that the school would be selected, the probability the teacher would be selected, and probability that the sampled individuals would participate (complete the survey).

It was not our purpose to draw direct comparisons between groups of teachers or principals, and we do not focus much attention on testing the significance of differences between specific groups of principals or teachers. Instead we focus on differences which seem large enough to be of practical importance. As a general rule of thumb, a difference between two percentage estimates of 15-20 points would be large enough for statistical significance at the 0.05 level (without a correction for multiple comparisons), and we used this significance level informally as a guideline for interpreting results.

To identify a more parsimonious and robust set of factors for describing classroom practices, we conducted principal components factor analyses of the teaching practice items in mathematics and writing, including all the measures of content coverage, teaching strategies and student activities. We conducted these analyses separately for fourth and seventh grade teachers, and the resulting factor structure was very similar for both grades. We selected eleven mathematics factors and six writing factors that were similar across grade levels, and we defined new variables as the mean of the items loading most strongly on each factor. Table 2 lists the derived mathematics and writing variables. The list of items comprising each variable, and the reliabilities of each scale are listed in Tables A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix. We used a similar procedure to define sets of derived background and opinion factors from the teacher and principal surveys. These factors are listed in Tables A.3 and A.4 of the Appendix.

**Table 2**  
**Derived Mathematics and Writing Practice Variables**

Mathematics	Writing
Mathematical problem solving	Writing process
Relating mathematics to other fields	Conference and assess writing
Constructive mathematics practices	Focus on topic, audience and purpose
Focus on mathematics EALRs and rubrics	Rubric-based writing
Focus on measurement	Practice WASL in writing
Practice WASL in mathematics	Focus on writing conventions
Demonstrating mathematics	
Peer interaction in mathematics	
Write about mathematics	
Conduct speed drills	
Focus on number sense	

Note: the last three mathematics variables are defined by single items

To investigate the similarity of practices across schools, we partitioned the schools in our sample into two groups based on student background factors. The percent of minority students and the percent of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch were the classification variables that were used, and the state median values for elementary schools and for middle schools were used as the cut points. We computed the average score on each derived variable for each school and then compared the means of these values for high- and low-minority schools and high- and low-income schools.

Finally, we used multiple regression analysis to investigate the relationship between WASL scores and school practices and principal and teacher opinions as reported on the principal and teacher surveys. We obtained school-level WASL scores and student demographic information for 1998-99 and 1999-2000 from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The data file included the number of students tested in each subject, scaled WASL scores, and the number achieving the standard in each subject. The file also included student demographic information at the school level, including race/ethnicity and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches. The question we examined was whether school practices and opinions of principals and teachers were significantly related to student achievement, controlling for differences in school size and student demographics.

Our experience in 1999 suggested that background factors were the strongest predictors of WASL scores and that few other measured variables were significant. Lacking a strong basis for identifying variables to include in these models, we included all the derived variables in the model and used stepwise regression analyses to identify significant predictors. We focused on the subjects covered in the surveys—writing and mathematics,—and we estimated separate models at each grade level. Included in the analyses were the derived principal variables, the derived teacher opinion variables, and the derived teacher practice variables for the subjects under investigation.

## Results

Surveys in 1999 and 2000 revealed that educators are learning about the Washington reform and making changes to implement it. Changes are widespread—in educators' understandings, district and school policies, and teachers' practice. However, the changes are not uniform and happen gradually. We did not find educators adopting the reform overnight. The surveys revealed a reform in transition, i.e., one in which educators had acquired knowledge about the reform and were gradually making changes in practice to support it.

**Learning about the reform.** Washington educators continue to learn about the reform through inservice training and professional development. The most common activity undertaken

by almost all schools to learn about the reform was to hold staff meetings that focused on WASL issues. Most schools also focused their inservice training and professional development on WASL-related activities. For both teachers and principals, approximately two-thirds or more of teachers reported that their professional development emphasized the EALRs and performance benchmarks, WASL, and aligning curriculum with the EALRs. One-half to two-thirds of teachers reported that their professional development also emphasized reading, writing, mathematics and communication/listening content. Educators also reported that they understood the reform components. In particular, virtually all principals and most teachers understood the EALRs, WASL, and alignment of curriculum and instruction well, though more principals than teachers (by about ten percentage points) reported understanding the EALRs well. Less well understood were the newer accountability provisions of the reform (e.g., the second grade reading accuracy and fluency assessment, the fourth grade reading improvement goals, and the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission).

Principals and teachers are generally supportive of the reform, though more principals than teachers support the reform and expect it to be enduring. Three-fourths of principals think that the goals of the reform are attainable; about 70 percent of principals think that the time spent administering the state tests is well spent and that these reforms will persist beyond five years. Teachers are less positive. Sixty percent of seventh grade teachers, but only 40 percent of fourth grade teachers agree that the goals of the reform are attainable, and 21 percent strongly disagree that the goals are attainable. Only 40 percent of teachers think that the information learned from state testing is worth the time spent administering the test, and 70 percent of teachers think that this reform (WASL, EALRs) will be replaced in four or five years.

**School and district policy changes.** Schools and districts are changing policies to support the Washington education reform. In 2000, 90 percent of schools had developed school plans to improve performance on WASL. This represents an increase of 18 percentage points since 1999 in the number of middle schools reporting school planning as a strategy for improving WASL (Stecher, Barron, Chun and Ross, 2000). About one-half of the schools added summer

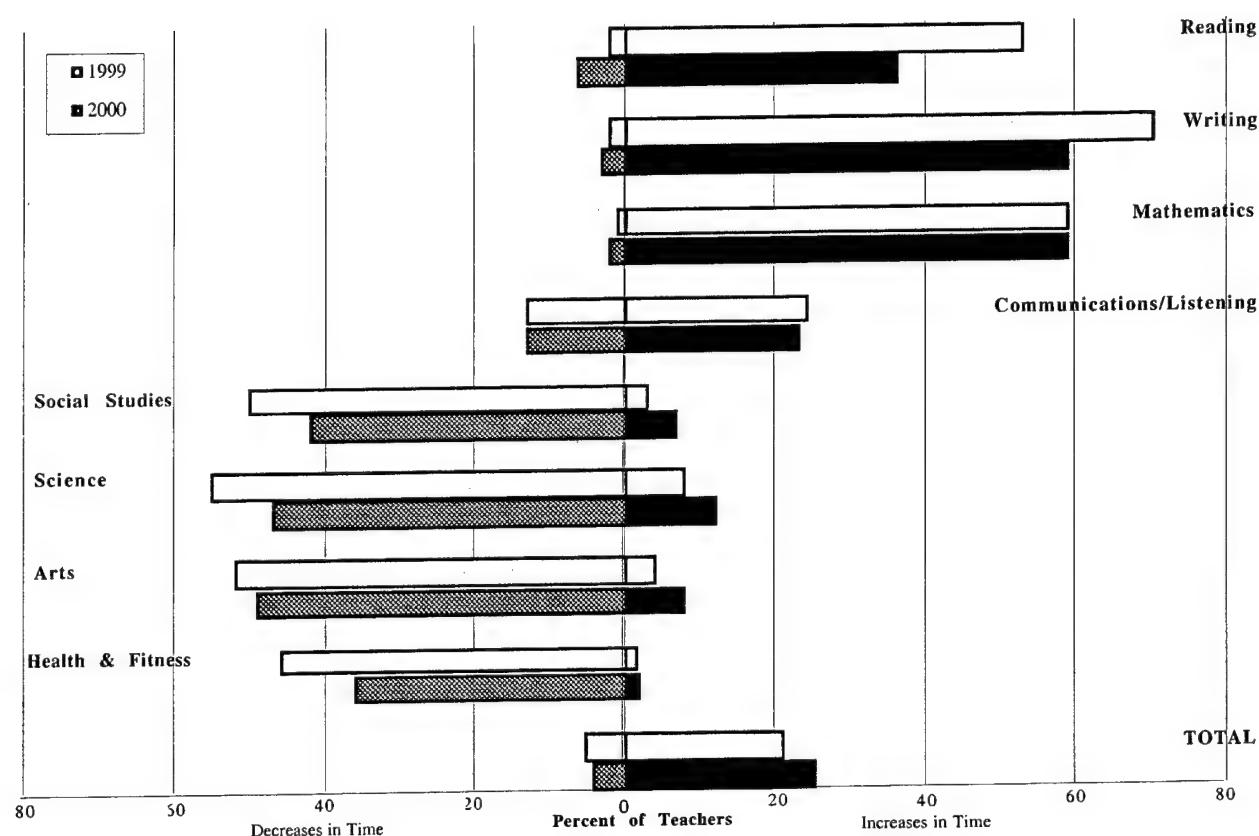
school to increase instructional time, and many said they did this in response to WASL. About one-half of the schools also changed their school schedules to add time for reading to improve WASL scores.

Nationally, state testing programs have reduced the role of local tests in assessment and accountability systems. Yet, districts often supplement state tests with local testing programs (Goertz, Duffy and Le Floch, 2001). This appears to be true in Washington, as well. In 2000, about 40 percent of elementary school principals and 60 percent of middle school principals reported that their districts were changing grades, subjects or content tested to align with EALRs. The percentages were slightly higher in 1999. About one-half of principals reported that districts continued to introduce new local assessments in 2000, which was ten to 25 percentage points fewer than 1999. Only about 20 percent of principals reported that their districts were phasing out district assessments. Thus, it appears that the testing burden on schools and students in Washington continues to increase.

**Classroom practice changes.** The surveys revealed changes in teachers' allocation of time as well as in their curriculum, pedagogy and student learning activities. The change in use of instructional time is dramatic but the changes in teacher practices are more subtle.

There has been a shift in instructional time from non-tested to tested subjects. Fourth grade teachers who teach all subjects report that they are spending two-thirds of their instructional time (median of 16 hours per week) on the four tested subjects. Teachers spend most time on reading, then mathematics, and then writing. The median teacher spends five hours per week on reading, five hours per week on mathematics, and four hours per week on writing. In the other subjects, the median teacher spends only one to two hours per week per subject. Even here there is considerable variation among teachers, with two-thirds of the teachers falling in the range of two to eight hours per week on reading, three to seven hours per week on mathematics, and two to six hours per week on writing. Figure 2 shows changes in teachers' allocation of class time. Both in 1999 and in 2000 teachers reported increasing the time they spent on reading, writing, mathematics and communication and decreasing the time on untested subjects of social studies,

science, arts, and health and fitness. This occurred despite the fact that there are EALRs for all subjects. This finding was consistent over the two years of the survey, though data from the 2000 survey suggested that fewer teachers increased time spent on reading and writing in 2000 compared to 1999, so the reallocation of time may be reaching an equilibrium (Stecher, Barron, Chun and Ross, 2000).



**Figure 2**  
**Reallocation of Instructional Time, Fourth Grade Teachers, 1999 and 2000**

Greater attention to the WASL-tested subjects is one way in which the WASL's influence seems to be greater than the influence of the EALRs. Other evidence that supports this conclusion comes from teachers' reports about curriculum alignment and the factors that influence their practice. In 1999, about 90 percent of teachers said that EALRs and WASL had some influence on changes in their mathematics and writing teaching, but the WASL's influence was stronger.

Almost two-thirds of fourth grade teachers and about one-half of seventh grade mathematics teachers reported that the WASL extended-response-type items strongly influenced their mathematics instruction. About 40 percent age points fewer said that EALRs strongly influenced their instruction. The differences were similar but less dramatic in writing. Similarly, more teachers and principals reported that local standards and curriculum were well aligned with EALRs in tested subjects than non-tested subjects.

## **Writing**

Teachers reported gradual changes in their writing instruction over the last three years. Most often they reported little or no change in the most common aspects of their practice, but increases in elements of the curriculum or teaching practices that were previously only addressed infrequently. This suggests that instruction is changing on the margins, as teachers add content or strategies to their existing lessons or pedagogy. The greatest changes relates to the distinctive aspects of the WASL in writing, which requires students to respond to two writing prompts in different mode or genre (narrative and expository for fourth grade, and persuasive and expository for seventh grade). The students' WASL writing samples are scored with a rubric which emphasizes genre (topic, audience and purpose) and writing conventions.

Looking at the frequency of our derived writing practice variables reflects these two emphases. Table 3 shows the average frequency of each writing composite. Attention to writing conventions is the most frequent component of writing instruction in both grades, but all the composites have average frequencies above 3.0. (This is not the case in mathematics, as will be shown below.) On average, writing conventions are covered more than one to two times per week. The next most frequent practices focus on the writing process and on genre, emphasizing topic, audience and purpose. Both of these are closely associated with the WASL. Rubric-based writing strategies and specific practice on WASL occur somewhat less frequently, but both occur more than one to two times per month, on average.

**Table 3**  
**Mean Scores on Writing Practices in 2000**

Factor	Fourth grade	Seventh grade writing
Focus on conventions	4.1	4.3
Writing process	3.6	3.8
Focus on topic, audience and purpose	3.6	3.6
Conference and assessment	3.2	3.3
Rubric-based writing	3.2	3.4
Practice WASL	3.1	3.1

1=zero times per year (never), 2=1-5 times per year (1-2 times per semester),  
 3=6-30 times per year (1-2 times per month), 4=31-80 times per year (1-2 times per week), 5=more than 80 times per year (almost daily).

It is possible to sense the evolution of practice by looking at teachers' reports of changes in their curriculum emphasis. It appears that the emphasis on writing process and writing conventions precede WASL because few teachers reported increasing their focus on these areas. Table 4 shows how many teachers covered each of the writing EALRs at least weekly and how many teachers increased their coverage of the writing EALRs since 1999. The greatest increase in writing coverage related to genre: writing for different purposes, in a variety of forms, for different audiences, and using a style that is appropriate to the audience and purpose. One-third to one-half of teachers at both grade levels increased the frequency with which they covered these aspects of writing. This change is quite consistent with the elements of writing that are emphasized in the WASL scoring rubrics.

Teachers are increasing their emphasis on genre, particularly the genre tested by the WASL at their respective grades. The EALRs identify four genres: narrative, persuasive, expository and descriptive. In general, most students are exposed to all four genres during the year, but not all types with equal frequency. About two-thirds of fourth grade teachers assign writing in each genre except persuasive writing at least monthly, and about one-half of seventh grade writing teachers assign each genre except persuasive writing at least monthly.

**Table 4**  
**Frequency of Coverage and Increase in Coverage of Writing EALRs in 2000**  
**(percent of teachers)**

Writing EALRs	Daily or weekly coverage of EALR		Increase in coverage since 1999	
	Grade 4	Grade 7	Grade 4	Grade 7
Application of writing conventions	84	84	34	40
Writing Process: draft	71	70	39	41
Writing Process: edit	65	70	38	37
Writing Process: pre-write	65	69	39	40
Writing Process: revise	63	68	40	44
Development of concept and design	47	36	56	42
Seek and offer feedback to other students	46	38	37	33
Genre: write for different purposes	45	67	45	57
Genre: style appropriate to audience and purpose	41	54	38	42
Genre: write for different audiences	36	45	41	42
Genre: write in a variety of forms	35	64	41	53
Writing process: publish	35	49	29	36
Assessment of students' own strengths and needs for improvement	33	37	39	34
Write for career applications	12	18	16	18

In 1999, OSPI decided that the grade four WASL writing prompts would require narrative and expository writing, while the grade seven WASL writing prompts would require persuasive and expository writing. The attention to writing in particular genres seems to have shifted since then. First, there has been a general increase in attention to writing. Overall, one-half of teachers have increased their use of writing prompts in the classroom. At least one-third of teachers in fourth grade reported increasing writing assignments in all genres. Second, there have been greater increases in the tested genres. About one-half of fourth grade teachers have increased their assignment of expository writing, and about one-third of them have increased their assignment of narrative, persuasive and descriptive writing. In seventh grade, about one-half of the teachers increasing the frequency of assignments requiring expository and persuasive writing.

Like the writing curriculum, writing instruction was also changing mildly, as shown in Table 5. Reading orally to students and explaining language mechanics are the teaching strategies used at least weekly by three-quarters or more of teachers. However, the areas of greatest change are the strategies used less frequently. Only about one-third to one-half of teachers use rubrics in

teaching writing either by commenting on student work in terms of WASL rubrics or teaching rubric-based approaches to writing (e.g., Six-Trait writing); but about one-half of the teachers reported increased use of these strategies.

**Table 5**  
**Frequency of and Increase in Use of Selected Teaching Strategies**  
**in Writing in 2000 (percent of teachers)**

Writing teaching strategies	Daily or weekly use of <u>teaching strategy</u>		Increase in use <u>since 1999</u>	
	Grade 4	Grade 7	Grade 4	Grade 7
Read orally to students	94	73	18	21
Explain correct usage of grammar, spelling, punctuation and syntax	81	90	31	33
Give examples of choosing appropriate words to describe objects or experiences	59	64	37	33
Suggest specific revisions to student writing	58	57	37	29
Teach Six-Trait or other rubric-based approach to writing	55	57	46	46
Use examples to discuss the craft of an author's writing	55	57	28	30
Provide a prompt to initiate student writing	54	55	49	48
Assess students' writing skills	49	67	37	34
Demonstrate use of pre-writing	49	38	41	32
Provide time for unstructured ("free") writing	45	52	20	17
Conference with students about their writing	34	25	27	19
Provide time for students to conference with each other about writing	34	30	33	36
Show examples of writing in different content areas	34	28	31	32
Comment on student writing in terms of WASL rubrics	30	41	47	59
Write with students on the same assignment	13	14	21	20

In addition to changes over time and differences between the grades, we also found some differences in writing curriculum and instruction associated with the ethnic composition of the school's student body (see Table 6). These differences were significant in the seventh grade but not the fourth grade. Seventh grade students in high-minority schools were exposed to almost all of the writing practice elements more frequently than seventh grade students in low-minority schools. Unfortunately, the survey does not provide any clear explanation for these differences. Further examination of our data, and other information is warranted.

**Table 6**  
**Mean Scores on Writing Practices by School Percent Minority in 2000**

Scale	Fourth grade		Seventh grade writing	
	Low <sup>1</sup>	High <sup>1</sup>	Low <sup>2</sup>	High <sup>2</sup>
Writing process	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.9
Conference and assessment	3.3	3.2	3.1*	3.4*
Focus on theme, audience and purpose	3.4	3.3	3.4*	3.7*
Rubric-based writing	3.2	3.3	3.2*	3.5*
Practice WASL	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.2
Focus on conventions	4.2	4.0	4.1*	4.4*

<sup>1</sup>Less than or equal to 18.9 percent minority. Greater than 18.9 percent minority.

<sup>2</sup>Less than or equal to 15.4 percent minority. Greater than 15.4 percent minority.

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01.

Overall, changes in writing appear to be consistent with the emphasis and incentives created by the Washington education reform, particularly with the emphases of the WASL test in writing. Teachers report increasing their coverage of aspects of writing that are most relevant to the WASL although they did not report commensurate decreases in other aspects of writing.

### Mathematics

As with writing, the most frequently occurring elements of the mathematics curriculum are fairly traditional—teacher led-demonstrations and a focus on number sense—but there have been important changes in mathematics over the last two years to make curriculum and instruction more consistent with the goals of the reform.

Table 7 shows the frequency of the eleven major mathematics composite variables. As noted above, teachers conduct demonstrations and teach lessons that focus on number sense more often than any other aspect of mathematics. However, the next most frequent practices are associated with a more standards-based view of mathematics—having students interact with one another and focusing on problem solving. The least frequent practices involve teaching measurement and focusing on the EALRs, and the gap between the most and the least frequent activities is large. More time is spent focusing on WASL than on the EALRs. With one exception, the results are similar for fourth grade teachers and seventh grade mathematics teachers. The exception is the infrequent use of speed drills in seventh grade.

**Table 7**  
**Mean Scores on Mathematics Practices in 2000**

Factor	Fourth grade	Seventh grade math
Demonstrating mathematics	4.1	4.2
Focus on number sense	4.1	4.0
Peer interaction	3.8	3.5
Problem solving	3.7	3.5
Write about mathematics	3.6	3.5
Practice WASL	3.5	3.3
Conduct speed drills	3.5	1.9
Relating mathematics to other areas	3.4	3.6
Constructive mathematics	3.1	2.8
Focus on measurement	2.9	2.9
Focus on EALRS and rubrics	2.8	2.6

1=zero times per year (never), 2=1-5 times per year (1-2 times per semester), 3=6-30 times per year (1-2 times per month), 4=31-80 times per year (1-2 times per week), 5=more than 80 times per year (almost daily).

Table 8 shows the relative emphasis teachers place on the five content areas identified specifically in the EALRs. More than two-thirds of the teachers covered number sense at least weekly, far more than any of the other content areas. However, the content of mathematics has been changing. The area of greatest change was in coverage of probability and statistics, where at least one-third of teachers reported increasing time spent on the content area. Many teachers also increased their coverage of algebraic sense and geometric sense. The area of least change was measurement.

**Table 8**  
**Frequency of Coverage and Increase in Coverage of Mathematics Content EALRs in 2000 (percent of teachers)**

Mathematics Content EALRs	Daily or weekly coverage of EALR		Increase in coverage since 1999	
	Grade 4	Grade 7	Grade 4	Grade 7
1.1 Number sense	79	68	33	24
1.2 Algebraic sense	37	57	40	31
1.3 Measurement	27	23	25	16
1.4 Geometric sense	27	20	34	24
1.5 Probability and statistics	22	14	43	33

Table 9 provides similar information for the mathematics process components of the EALRs. Perhaps the most significant information in the table is the extent of the increase in coverage of all the mathematical processes. For each element, between one-third and one-half of

the fourth grade teachers reported an increase in coverage since last year. In seventh grade the change was slightly smaller but equally widespread. Clearly, teachers are devoting more attention to these aspects of mathematics. Because of the way the EALRs were constructed, the more basic procedures, such as computation and the application of formulas and algorithms, are not included in the set of processes.

**Table 9**  
**Frequency of Coverage and Increase in Coverage of Mathematical Process EALRs in 2000 (percent of teachers)**

Mathematics process EALRs	Daily or weekly coverage of EALR		Increase in coverage since 1999	
	Grade 4	Grade 7	Grade 4	Grade 7
3.1 Analyze information	75	70	41	44
3.3 Draw conclusions and verify results	68	56	39	27
2.3 Construct solutions	68	59	29	32
5.3 Relate concepts to real life	65	82	42	34
4.2 Organize and interpret information	62	48	45	32
2.1 Investigate situations	62	58	35	28
5.1 Relate concepts within math	62	66	49	35
2.2 Formulate questions	56	49	46	40
4.3 Represent and share information	54	32	55	45
4.1 Gather information	51	43	50	31
5.2 Relate concepts to other disciplines	43	43	45	27

Mathematics teaching practices are changing along with mathematics content. Table 10 shows that traditional methods are the most common, but more reform-oriented practices are used regularly and are growing in popularity. Almost all teachers explain correct solutions and demonstrate new skills at least weekly, and about three-quarters regularly ask open-response questions with many right answers. This was also the area of greatest change. Almost one-half of the teachers increased their use of open-response questions, and about one-third increased the frequency with which they gave example of real-life situations in mathematics. Both strategies are consistent with the reform. Fourth grade teachers were more much more likely than seventh grade teachers to conduct speed drills regularly; one-third of seventh grade teachers actually decreased their use of speed drills. Fourth grade teachers were also more likely to have students demonstrate ideas using manipulatives than seventh grade teachers.

**Table 10**  
**Frequency of and Increase in Use of Selected Teaching Strategies**  
**in Mathematics in 2000 (percent of teachers)**

Mathematics teaching strategies	Daily or weekly use of teaching strategy		Increase in use since 1999	
	Grade 4	Grade 7	Grade 4	Grade 7
Explain correct solutions	90	93	28	17
Demonstrate new skill	84	81	22	15
Ask open-response questions with many right answers	79	68	48	42
Explain new concept	75	78	21	11
Assess students' mathematics skills	71	79	24	18
Give examples of real-life applications	70	76	32	25
Conduct speed drills	52	11	16	7
Demonstrate mathematical ideas using constructions, manipulatives, etc.	51	38	31	31

We compared the mathematics curriculum and teaching composite scores between schools serving high and low percentages of minority students, and we found that reform-oriented activities were more common in high-minority middle schools. As shown in Table 11, students in high-minority middle schools were asked to write about mathematics, to relate mathematics to other subjects, and to do hands-on and constructive mathematical activities more frequently than students in low-minority schools. Students in high-minority middle schools also worked with other students and focused on the EALRs and rubrics in mathematics somewhat more frequently than students in low-minority schools, although the differences were not statistically significant. There were no significant differences at the elementary level. This pattern was not evident when we compared schools on the basis of income level (see Table A.5 in Appendix A).

**Table 11**  
**Mean Scores on Mathematics Practices by School Percent Minority in 2000**

Factor	Fourth grade		Seventh grade math	
	Low <sup>1</sup>	High <sup>1</sup>	Low <sup>2</sup>	High <sup>2</sup>
Demonstrating mathematics	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2
Focus on number sense	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.1
Peer interaction	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.6
Problem solving	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.6
Write about mathematics	3.8	3.5	3.2*	3.7*
Relating mathematics to other areas	3.4	3.4	3.3*	3.7*
Practice WASL	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.3
Conduct speed drills	3.4	3.5	1.8	2.0
Constructive mathematics	3.1	3.0	2.5**	3.0**
Focus on EALRS and rubrics	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.7
Focus on measurement	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9

<sup>1</sup>Less than or equal to 18.9 percent minority. Greater than 18.9 percent minority.

<sup>2</sup>Less than or equal to 15.4 percent minority. Greater than 15.4% percent minority.

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01.

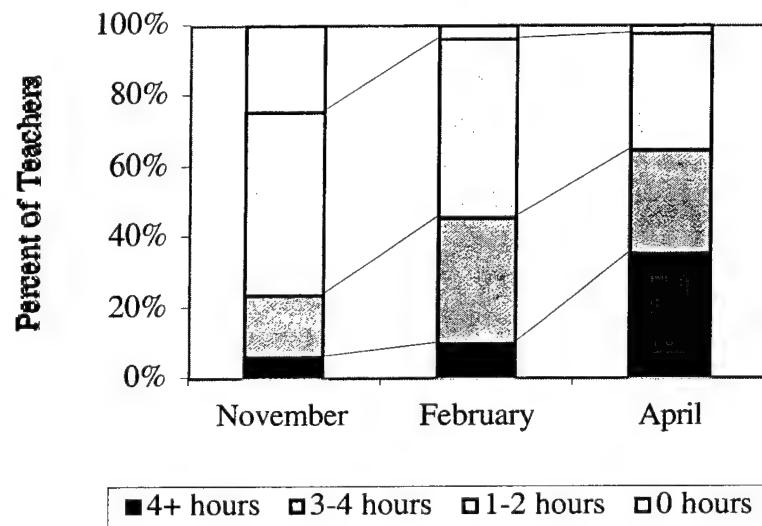
### Preparation for WASL

WASL is prominent in the minds of educators. All principals and teachers feel a moderate to great deal of pressure for their students to perform well on WASL. We asked teachers about the activities used in the classroom to help students do well on WASL tests. Many test preparation activities were evident, and teachers reported spending a fair amount of time, particularly as the testing date approaches, preparing for the test.

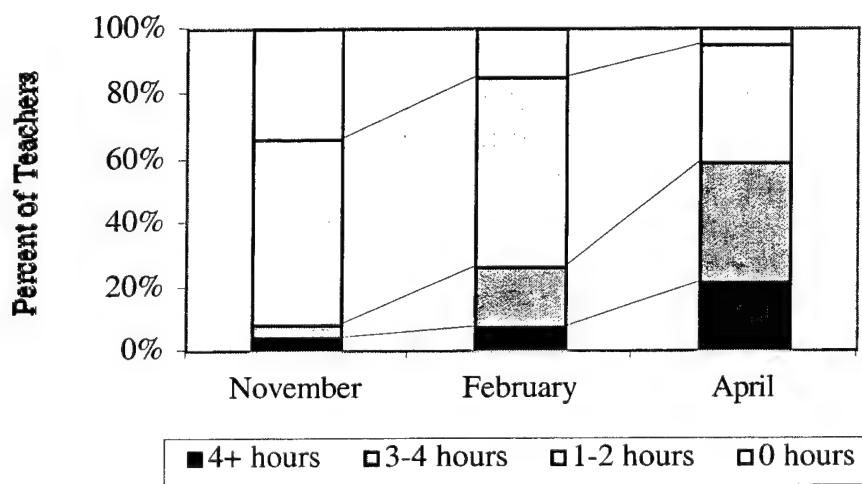
Some test-related activities have been incorporated into regular instructional practice in writing and mathematics. For example, more than one-half of the writing teachers use rubric-based approaches to teaching writing and use open-ended questions in the classroom at least weekly. In mathematics, more than one-half of the fourth grade teachers and more than 40 percent of the seventh grade mathematics teachers used open-ended questions in class work and have students practice using WASL-like items at least weekly.

Furthermore, teachers increase the amount of time spent on explicit WASL preparation as the test approaches in the spring. Near the beginning of the year, in November, about one-half of the teachers spend one to two hours a week preparing for the WASL. About one-quarter of the teachers do not do any explicit test preparation in November, and fewer than 10 percent spend an

hour a day or more on test preparation. However, as the test approaches, teachers increase the amount of time spent preparing for the test. In April, with the test imminent, one-fifth to one-third of teachers are spending more than four hours per week preparing for the test; fewer than 10 percent of the teachers are spending no time on test preparation. Figures 3 and 4 show WASL preparation time reported by mathematics teachers. The results were similar for writing teachers.



**Figure 3**  
**Hours Per Week Spent in Fourth Grade Classrooms**  
**Preparing for WASL Test in Mathematics in 2000**



**Figure 4**  
**Hours Per Week Spent in Seventh Grade Mathematics Classrooms**  
**Preparing for WASL Test in 2000**

The surveys also indicated that teachers pay more attention to the WASL than the EALRs that the tests are supposed to reflect. We presented teachers with two contrasting viewpoints on addressing the EALRs and WASL, and asked them to identify their own approach relative to these two. The first point of view focused on the standards: "I teach the EALRs, and I don't bother with WASL preparation at all. If students master the EALRs, they will do well on the WASL." The contrasting viewpoint focused on the test: "I teach to the WASL, and I make sure my students practice the kinds of questions they will encounter when they take the test. It is important for students to master the material on the WASL." Two-thirds of teachers identified their teaching as more like "teach(ing) to the WASL," than "teach(ing) the EALRs." Principals responded similarly when asked about the approach they encouraged at their school.

### **The Relationship Between School and Classroom Practices and WASL Scores**

We conducted regression analyses to see whether school and classroom practice data collected in our surveys was associated with WASL scores or WASL score gains. We predicted WASL scores as a function of aggregate student demographic variables, principal opinion variables, teacher opinion variables, and teaching practice variables (i.e., mathematics practices were included in the mathematics model, writing practices were included in the writing model, and no practice variables were included in the reading model). For the most part, the only variables that were significant predictors of WASL scores were aggregate student demographic factors. Table 12 summarizes the significant relationships revealed by the six regression models we constructed for mathematics, writing and reading in grades four and seven. The full results are listed in Tables A.7 to A.9 in the Appendix. In a few cases, attention to specific school or classroom practices was associated with higher WASL scores. For instance, having a curriculum that was aligned with EALRs and devoting more time to relating mathematics to life and to other fields were associated with higher math scores in either fourth or seventh grade. Still needing to work on some aspects of the reform (in the opinion of the principal) was associated with lower scores. Similarly, teaching more rubric-based writing was associated with higher WASL writing scores in one grade. These results are encouraging. However, other results are more difficult to

understand. For example, it is harder to see why taking more actions to support the reform would be associated with lower writing scores at the seventh grade level. Overall, we did not find strong evidence that average practices measured by our surveys were directly related to school success on the WASL. We also examined the relationship between school practices and WASL gains from 1999 to 2000 with similar, inconclusive results.

**Table 12**  
**Summary of Regression Results**

Factors positively related to 2000 WASL scores	Factors negatively related to 2000 WASL scores
<b>Mathematics</b>	
Percent Asian (4, 7)	Percent free/reduced-price lunch (4, 7)
School curriculum aligned with EALRs (4)	Percent Hispanic (4)
Relating mathematics to life and other fields (4)	School still needs to work on reform (7)
<b>Writing</b>	
Percent Asian (4)	Percent free/reduced-price lunch (4, 7)
Rubric-based writing (4)	Principal support for reform (4)
Focus on writing conventions (7)	School actions in support of reform (7)
<b>Reading</b>	
	Percent free/reduced-price lunch (4,7)
	Percent Hispanic (4,7)
	Percent American Indian (4)

## Discussion

Two years of surveys in Washington state reveal that school policies as well as classroom curriculum and instruction are changing in ways consistent with the Washington education reform. However, the changes are gradual, and neither curriculum nor teaching has been transformed overnight. Furthermore, the changes are uneven; some schools are making more progress than others. Some of the variation between schools is associated with student ethnicity and family income. We also detected a stronger influence of the WASL relative to the EALRs—a difference identified by educators and apparent in their behaviors—which raises some concern about the incentives created by the system and the ultimate direction of the reform. Washington's approach to reform—a slow, decade-long implementation of standards, tests and accountability—has features to recommend to other states.

**Gradual changes.** The survey results reinforce the common belief that change takes time. After two years, we find evidence that many teachers are changing their practice, but these changes are gradual. For example, although many teachers report increases in the amount of class time they devote to mathematics, the median number of hours devoted to mathematics per week did not change from 1999 to 2000. This relationship was true for reading and writing as well—a substantial percentage of teachers increased their coverage, but the overall median amount of time did not change. The greatest changes in these subjects occurred in previously untaught or infrequently taught aspects of the curriculum, such as statistics and probability in mathematics and rubric-based writing. This response by teachers may be appropriate. Attention to the EALRs and/or the WASL may be revealing gaps in instruction—standards that are not taught—and encouraging teachers to include aspects of subjects that were previously untaught.

The evidence also suggests that teachers are adding new instructional strategies in reading, writing and mathematics without dropping any existing practices. The surveys revealed increases in many aspects of instruction without concomitant decreases in other aspects. This is explained, in part, by increases in the amount of instructional time devoted to these subjects. However, in the long run, this increase is a cause for concern. The untested subjects are scheduled to become tested subjects in a few years. Just adding more content and new teaching strategies without making necessary tradeoffs is not a sustainable way to respond to the reform.

**Uneven changes.** The surveys indicate that school and classroom changes are uneven. While principals and teachers uniformly feel a great deal of pressure for their students to perform well on the WASL, principals' and teachers' actions have been less uniform. The surveys reveal a lot of variation in educators' responses to the education reform. Overall there appears to be progress, but differences between and within schools remain. These differences, particularly those associated with ethnicity and socioeconomic status of students, need to be studied further. Lasting differences in opportunities to learn will have equity implications.

**Improving WASL scores.** One of the goals of this research was to identify changes in practice that were associated with improved outcomes and use these as a basis for improvement.

Overall, teachers' practice appears to be more reform-oriented each year, and in general WASL scores are increasing. Yet, this general trend was not reflected in our analyses of specific practice. We did not detect any relationships between curriculum emphases, teaching practice, or educators' beliefs and school-level WASL scores. In 1999 we found that greater curriculum alignment was associated with higher WASL scores (Stecher, Barron, Chun and Ross, 2000), but that finding was not replicated this year.

There are several possible explanations for the disappointing finding. First, the survey may have not captured the key aspects of teaching that affect WASL scores. It is possible that the types of curricular and instructional practices that matter are not the ones we included in the survey or not ones that are amenable to measurement using survey techniques. It is also possible that frequency of practice is not as important as quality of practice, something we could not measure with our survey. Another possible explanation for the lack of measurable relationship is aggregation. WASL scores were only available at the school level, so we averaged teachers' responses at the school and compared the average response to the school's WASL-scaled score. Using average teachers responses and school-level performance may weaken the association between actual teaching practice and student performance. In addition, having to conduct the analysis at the school level rather than the teacher level effectively reduces our sample size by about two-thirds. Reduced sample size decreases the precision of the estimates in the regression model, making it difficult to detect all but the most robust relationships. It is also possible that teachers' reports of their practice do not accurately reflect the teaching and learning in their classroom (c.f., Cohen, 1990). The fact that we did not find significant effects for most practice variables is not conclusive evidence that they do not exist.

**Influence of the test.** As is the case in many other states that have adopted standards-based reforms with high-stakes tests, Washington's state assessment is the most high-profile component of the reform. Teachers and principals feel a great deal of pressure for students to perform well on the WASL. Schools have made institutional and organizational changes, such as instituting summer school, in response to past WASL scores. Teachers have shifted instructional

time and focus to subjects tested by the WASL. Most teachers spend time preparing students for the test, particularly as the testing date approaches.

However, this attention to the WASL, rather than the EALRs which the WASL is supposed to measure, raises concerns about the extent of “teaching to the test” and the generalizability of WASL scores. It is important to remember that tests cover only a fraction of the domains of performance identified in most statements of standards. The tests are designed to sample student performance, not to exhaustively measure their mastery of a broad domain. We make inferences from the test content to the domain based on the belief that the test is a random and representative sample of content. Focused preparation on tested format and content that ignore untested content can artificially inflate scores, providing a misleading measure of students’ test-taking ability rather than their attainment of standards.

Research suggests that teachers respond to high-stakes tests by narrowing curriculum and devoting time to test preparation at the expense of broader learning goals (Stecher and Mitchell, 1995; Stecher, 1999). We tried to determine if this was the case in Washington, i.e., if there was greater attention paid to the content and format of the test than to the broad underlying goals of the reform and the domains of knowledge represented in the standard. The surveys asked teachers a number of questions about the influence of WASL versus EALRs on their practices and on students’ test scores. There is no doubt that teachers are definitely responding to the WASL. Many fourth grade teachers have reallocated most of their teaching time—68 percent—to reading, writing and mathematics. This increase in time on tested subjects has been at the expense of other subjects. For example, the role of social studies in the curriculum has been reduced dramatically. Most teachers spend only one to three hours per week teaching social studies, and one -half of the teachers have reduced this allocation. In writing, teachers reported increasing the assignment of tested genres and a decrease in untested genres, despite the Commission on Student Learning’s admonition that the assignment of tested genre to particular grades was “in no way meant to limit classroom instruction or district and classroom-based assessments” (Ensign, 1999).

The focus on currently-tested subjects seems short-sighted because WASL tests in science, social studies, arts, and health and fitness are on the horizon. They are scheduled to be added to the system over the next four to five years. Washington educators believe that increased classroom time is a major factor contributing to increased test scores (Bergeson, Mayo, Fitten and Bylsma, 2000). Decreasing classroom time in non-tested subjects may lead to lower scores on those tests when they are implemented. Attention to the new tests may lead to reductions in classroom time on the old subjects, causing those scores to drop. Instructional time is a fixed resource, and large shifts due to short-term considerations are likely to have undesirable long-term consequences.

An additional concern is that the new WASL tests will be administered in grades five and eight, instead of grades four and seven. This policy is designed to reduce the burden on teachers and students in the fourth and seventh grades. However, the practice also removes the direct incentive for fourth and fifth grade teachers to address standards in all subjects. Previous teacher surveys in Kentucky indicated that teachers' curriculum coverage was directly related to the subjects tested at their grade (Barron and Stecher, 1999). Kentucky students in fourth and seventh grades received more instruction in reading, writing and science, while students in fifth and eighth grade received more instruction in mathematics, social studies, and arts/humanities. The consequence of not addressing the existing reallocation of time in fourth grade may be poor student performance on the new fifth grade WASL tests of science, social studies, arts, and health and fitness due to lack of a foundation skills.

**Time to reflect.** One noteworthy characteristic of Washington's reform is the gradual implementation of assessments and accountability provisions. The experience of other states suggests that Washington has been wise to implement slowly. The schedule has allowed Washington educators to learn about the reform, and most educators appear to support it. State policymakers have also had the time to address concerns and make changes necessary to maintain support for the reform. For example, many educators raised concerns about the difficulty level of the WASL in mathematics for grade four. Indeed, only 37 percent of elementary principals and 19

percent of fourth grade teachers agreed that “WASL standards for mathematics are of an appropriate difficulty for the tested grades.” In response, OSPI conducted a study that determined the test was appropriate (Bergeson, Mayo, Fitten and Bylsma, 2000). Their efforts helped to satisfy teachers’ concerns. The state has taken its time in other ways. The WASL in science was scheduled for mandatory administration in Spring 2001, but implementation was delayed to improve the test. State Superintendent Terry Bergeson said, “I can’t put a test out that isn’t ready... The test needs to be a very good vision of science education (since) it will drive curriculum and teaching” (*The News Tribune*, October 17, 2000).

Other states that have charged ahead have found themselves on the defensive when critics raised concerns about the tests’ technical quality or about accountability policies. For example, in 1998 Kentucky legislators replaced the Kentucky Instructional Results and Information System (KIRIS) reforms with the Commonwealth Accountability and Testing System (CATS) in response to concerns and controversy over the reliability of performance tasks on the test, distribution of monetary awards to school personnel for increased test scores and designation of schools as “low-performing” when their scores decreased. Similarly, many states, including Michigan and Florida, are having to back down from tough accountability policies that attach “high stakes”—monetary awards, voucher opportunities, educator employment, and high school graduation—to test scores because of the political pressure the policies generate. Washington benefits from the opportunity to learn from other states’ experiences. Its legislature is currently considering an accountability system and the Certificate of Mastery requirement for graduation—which includes passing WASL in reading, writing and mathematics.

The downside of gradual implementation may be the difficulty of sustaining teachers’ enthusiasm for changing over a long period of time. Washington teachers have begun to change their practices, in part due to the current WASL exams. Over time, these practices may become institutionalized. Teachers may resist further changes in practice because they see the results (or lack of results) in current WASL tests, they are exhausted from the changes, or the incentives to make changes in new content are targeted at different grade levels.

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## Appendix

**Table A.1**  
**Definition of Mathematics Practice Factors**

Factor	Items
Mathematical problemsolving (8 items) alpha=.92 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .92 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: formulate questions, construct solutions, analyze information, draw conclusions and verify results, gather information, organize and interpret information, represent and share information, and predict results and make inferences.
Relating mathematics to life and other fields (5 items) alpha =.85 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .80 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: relate mathematical concepts and procedures to other disciplines, relate mathematical concepts to real-life situations, give examples of real-life applications of mathematics skills, use mathematics to solve real-life problems, use mathematics in the context of other subjects.
Constructive mathematics (4 items) alpha = .80 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .81 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: demonstrate mathematical ideas using constructions, manipulatives, etc., solve problems using manipulatives, work on extended mathematics activities that take several days, discover mathematics concepts for themselves.
Focus on mathematics EALRs and rubrics (4 items) alpha = .78 (4 <sup>th</sup> ) .81 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: discuss EALRs in mathematics with your students, have students score classroom work using mathematics rubrics, use open-ended questions in classroom work, display scoring rubrics in classroom.
Focus on measurement (4 items) alpha = .74 (4 <sup>th</sup> ) .75 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: measurement, geometric sense, probability and statistics, use measuring tools in mathematics
Practice WASL in mathematics (2 items) alpha = .76 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .90 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: have students practice using WASL-like items, discuss responses to WASL or WASL-like items that illustrate different levels of performance.
Demonstrating mathematics (2 items) alpha = .76 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .86 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: demonstrate how to perform a new mathematics skill, explain a new concept.
Peer interaction in mathematics (2 items) alpha = .78 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .78 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: [students] explain their thinking to other students, work on problem solving in groups with other students.

**Table A.2**  
**Definition of Writing Practice Factors**

Factor	Items
Writing process (5 items) alpha = .91 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .94 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: pre-write, draft, revise, edit, publish.
Conference and assessment of writing (6 items) alpha = .84 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .83 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: assessment of students' own strength and needs for improvement, seek and offer feedback to other students, give example of choosing appropriate words to describe objects or experiences, conference with students about their writing, provide time for students to conference with each other about writing, assess students writing skills.
Focus on theme, audience and purpose (5 items) alpha = .88 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .87 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: Development of concept and design, style appropriate to audience and purpose, write for different audiences, write for different purposes, write in a variety of forms.
Rubric-based writing (4 items) alpha = .83 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .74 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: teach Six-Trait or other rubric-based approach to writing, have students score classroom work using rubrics, use open-ended questions in classroom work, display scoring rubrics in classroom.
Practice WASL in writing (4 items) alpha = .78 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .76 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: comment on student writing in terms of WASL rubrics, provide a prompt to initiate student writing, have student practice using WASL-like items, discuss responses to WASL or WASL-like items that illustrate different levels of performance.
Focus on writing conventions (2 items) alpha = .65 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .74 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Frequency: application of writing conventions, explain correct usage of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and syntax.

**Table A.3**  
**Definition of Teacher Knowledge and Opinion Factors**

Factor	Items
Professional development about reform (3 items) alpha = .72 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .83 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Amount: professional development related to EALRs, WASL, and alignment of curriculum and instruction with EALRs.
Understanding of reform (3 items) alpha = .75 (4 <sup>th</sup> ) .82 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Level of understanding: about EALRs, WASL, and alignment of curriculum and instruction with EALRs.
WALS is appropriate and useful (6 items) alpha = .78 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .73 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Agreement: WASL standards for math are appropriate, WASL standards for writing are appropriate, it is easy to raise WASL scores, WASL classroom score reports are useful, WASL school information is useful, and information from state testing is useful.

**Table A.4**  
**Definition of Principal Knowledge and Opinion Factors**

Factor	Items
Understanding of reform (3 items) alpha = .80 (4 <sup>th</sup> ) .86 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Level of understanding: about EALRs, WASL, and alignment of curriculum and instruction with EALRs.
District standards aligned with EALRs (4 times) alpha = .90 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .86 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Degree of alignment: reading, writing, mathematics, communication
School curriculum aligned with EALRs (4 items) alpha=.79 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .76 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Degree of alignment: reading, writing, mathematics, communication
School still needs to work on reform (5 items) alpha=.62 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .74 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Agreement: teachers find it difficult to align curriculum with EALRs, teachers are slow to change practices to support reform, teachers do not understand content they need to know, teachers do not all feel responsible for improving WASL scores, WASL strained my relationship with teachers.
Support for reform (4 items) alpha=.62 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .71 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Agreement: goals of reform are attainable, WASL standards in mathematics are appropriate, WASL standards in writing are appropriate, do not expect new reform to replace WASL/EALRs in five years.
Tests provide useful information (3 items) alpha=.76 (4 <sup>th</sup> ), .65 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Agreement: WASL classroom score reports are useful, WASL school reports are useful, the information learned from tests is worth the cost.
School actions to support reform	Number of policies enacted to support reform (of 21 possible)

**Table A.5**  
**Mean Teacher Scores on Mathematics Practice Scales**  
**by School Percent Free/Reduced-Price Lunch**

Scales	Fourth grade		Seventh grade math	
	Low <sup>1</sup>	High <sup>1</sup>	Low <sup>2</sup>	High <sup>2</sup>
Focus on number sense	4.3*	4.0*	3.9	4.1
Direct instruction	4.2	4.0	4.0**	4.5**
Peer interaction	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.5
Problem solving	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.7
Write about mathematics	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.6
Relating mathematics to other areas	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.5
Practice WASL	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.5
Conduct speed drills	3.4	3.5	2.0	1.9
Constructive mathematics	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.9
Focus on measurement	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9
Focus on EALRS and rubrics	2.8	2.8	2.4*	2.9*

<sup>1</sup>Less than or equal to 33.8 percent free/reduced-price lunch. Greater than 33.8 percent free/reduced-price lunch.

<sup>2</sup>Less than or equal to 29.1 percent free/reduced-price lunch. Greater than 29.1 percent free/reduced-price lunch.

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01.

**Table A.6**  
**Mean Teacher Scores on Writing Practice Scales by School Percent**  
**Free/Reduced-Price Lunch**

Scale	Fourth grade		Seventh grade writing	
	Low <sup>1</sup>	High <sup>1</sup>	Low <sup>2</sup>	High <sup>2</sup>
Writing process	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.6
Conference and assessment	3.4*	3.1*	3.3	3.2
Focus on theme, audience and purpose	3.5**	3.2**	3.7	3.4
Rubric-based writing	3.4*	3.1*	3.4	3.3
Practice WASL	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2
Focus on conventions	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.4

<sup>1</sup>Less than or equal to 33.8 percent free/reduced-price lunch. Greater than 33.8 percent free/reduced-price lunch.

<sup>2</sup>Less than or equal to 29.1 percent free/reduced-price lunch. Greater than 29.1 percent free/reduced-price lunch.

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01.

**Table A.7**  
**Regression of Fourth and Seventh Grade WASL Mathematics Scores**  
**on School Demographics and Derived Principal and Teacher Variables**  
**Final Stepwise Regression Model (0.15 significance level for entry)**

<b>Variables</b>	<u>Fourth grade</u>		<u>Seventh grade</u>	
	Beta	Pr > F	Beta	Pr > F
Intercept	0	0.748	0	0.498
Percent free/reduced-price lunch	<b>-0.308</b>	<b>0.008</b>	<b>-0.702</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>
Percent Asian	<b>0.227</b>	<b>0.026</b>	<b>0.326</b>	<b>0.002</b>
Percent American Indian	-0.175	0.082		
Percent Black	-0.173	0.087	-0.191	0.080
Percent Hispanic	<b>-0.409</b>	<b>0.001</b>		
Percent female				
Enrollment				
<b>Principal variables</b>				
Understanding of reform				
School curriculum aligned with EALRs			<b>0.187</b>	<b>0.043</b>
School still needs to work on reform	<b>-0.272</b>	<b>0.005</b>		
Principal support for reform				
Tests provide useful information				
School actions to support reform				
<b>Teacher variables</b>				
Professional development about reform				
Understanding of reform				
WALS is appropriate and useful				
<b>Mathematics practice variables</b>				
Mathematical problem solving				
Relating mathematics to life and other fields	<b>0.324</b>	<b>0.003</b>		
Constructive mathematics				
Focus on mathematics EALRs and rubrics				
Focus on measurement	-0.164	0.120		
Practice WASL in mathematics				
Demonstrating Mathematics	0.162	0.086		
Peer Interaction in Mathematics				
<b>R-squared</b>	<b>.70</b>		<b>.76</b>	

**Table A.8**  
**Regression of Fourth and Seventh Grade WASL Writing Scores**  
**on School Demographics and Derived Principal and Teacher Variables**  
**Final Stepwise Regression Model (0.15 significance level for entry)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Fourth grade</b>		<b>Seventh grade</b>	
	Beta	Pr > F	Beta	Pr > F
Intercept	0	0.235	0	0.131
Percent free/reduced -price lunch	<b>-0.292</b>	<b>0.015</b>	<b>-0.604</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>
Percent Asian	<b>0.249</b>	<b>0.034</b>		
Percent American Indian				
Percent Black				
Percent Hispanic				
Percent female				
Enrollment				
<b>Principal variables</b>				
Understanding of reform			0.221	0.060
School curriculum aligned with EALRs				
School still working on reform	-0.179	0.115		
Principal support for reform	<b>-0.234</b>	<b>0.040</b>		
Tests provide useful information				
School actions to support reform			<b>-0.324</b>	<b>0.004</b>
<b>Teacher variables</b>				
Professional development about reform				
Understanding of reform				
WALS is appropriate and useful			0.160	0.141
<b>Writing practice variables</b>				
Writing process				
Conference and assessment of writing				
Focus on theme, audience and purpose				
Rubric-based writing			<b>0.270</b>	<b>0.024</b>
Practice WASL in writing				
Focus on writing conventions				<b>0.285</b>
<b>R-squared</b>		.45		.66

**Table A.9**  
**Regression of Fourth and Seventh Grade WASL Reading Scores**  
**on School Demographics and Derived Principal and Teacher Variables**  
**Final Stepwise Regression Model (0.15 significance level for entry)**

<b>Variables</b>	<u>Fourth grade</u>		<u>Seventh grade</u>	
	Beta	Pr > F	Beta	Pr > F
Intercept	0	<b>0.046</b>	0	0.778
Percent free/reduced-price lunch	-0.312	<b>0.010</b>	-0.345	<b>0.006</b>
Percent Asian				
Percent American Indian	-0.382	<b>0.015</b>		
Percent Black			-0.162	0.089
Percent Hispanic	-0.382	<b>0.002</b>	-0.562	<b>&lt;.0001</b>
Percent female				
Enrollment	-0.172	0.092		
<b>Principal variables</b>				
Understanding of reform				
School curriculum aligned with EALRs			0.160	0.094
School still needs to work on reform	-0.185	0.058		
Principal support for reform				
Tests provide useful information				
School actions to support reform				
<b>Teacher variables</b>				
Professional development about reform	0.155	0.133		
Understanding of reform				
WALS is appropriate and useful				
<b>R-squared</b>		.61		.73